

PAUL BARRET INTERVIEW

:11

WELL THE BOOK IS STRUCTURED AROUND PORTRAITS OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES AND DEARBORN AS THE UNOFFICIAL CAPITOL OF ARAB AMERICA IS ALMOST OBLIGATORY ON ANY BOOK ON ARAB AMERICAN MUSLIMS. I WAS LOOKING FOR A FIGURE IN DEARBORN WHO KNEW ALMOST EVERYBODY IN TOWN, SOCIALLY, CULTURALLY, AND SO FORTH. AND AFTER MEETING SUBLANI, HE SEEMED TO FIT THAT BUILD, SO I BEGAN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME. HIS STORY HAS A LOT OF ELEMENTS IN IT THAT ARE COMMON TO THE IMMIGRANT STORIES TO MI AND THE MIDWEST I GENERAL. PLUS THERE WAS THE ADDED ROLE OF BEING THE PUBLISHER OF A NEWSPAPER THAT COVERS THE COMMUNITY AND OFTEN IS PART OF CONTROVERSEY IN THE COMMUNITY. AND HE IS ONE OF THE MAIN POLITICAL ORGANIZERS, SO YOU ALMOST HAVE ONE STOP SHOPPING WITH OSAMA.

1:07

HE CAME HERE TO THIS COUNTRY WHEN HE WAS IN HIS EARLY 20'S TO GO TO COLLEGE, HE CAME HERE, WHAT HE TOLD ME WAS WITH 180\$ IN HIS POCKET AND NOT MUCH MORE. WITHIN A COUPLE OF DAYS HE HAD 3 DIFFERENT JOBS, DELIVERING PIZZA, PARKING CARS, THAT KIND OF THING. WENT TO COLLEGE SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THAT, EARNED A DEGREE IN ENGINEERING, WHICH IS A VERY COMMON DEGREE FOR MALE IMMIGRANTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. THEY WANT A SOLID JOB THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO SEND MONEY HOME. HE DID ALL OF THOSE THINGS. HE BECAME SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS, RATHER EARLY ON, IN AN IMPORT/EXPORT BUSINESS AIMED AT THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE HE SOLD EQUIPMENT FROM THIS COUNTRY THAT WAS USED BY ARAB CONTRACTERS. ALL OF THOSE THINGS ARE A BIG PART OF THE ARAB AMERICAN IMMIGRATION STORY AND THE MUSLIM AMERICAN IMIGRATION STORY. WHERE THINGS TOOK AN UNUSUAL TURN FOR OSAMA WAS DURING THE ISREALI INVASION OF LEBANON IN 1982 WHICH FED INTO THE CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON AND ALL THE CHAOS THERE, HE WAS VERY FRUSTRATED IN HOW THAT CONFLICT WAS REFLECTED BY THE MEDIA. AND HE JUST DECIDED, IM GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS. IM GOING TO START A NEWSPAPER, EVEN TOUGH HE

HAD NO JOURNALISTIC BACKGROUND . AND THROUGH THE NEWSPAPER HIS EXPERIENCE BECAME MUCH MORE HEIGHTENED AND HE BECAME AN UNUSUAL CHARACTER, NOT JUST A STAND IN FOR MANY OTHER GOOD PPL.

GERI: YOU ARE JEWISH, TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH OSAMA BIN LADEN AND ALL THE OTHER SOURCES, DID THAT POSE A CONFLICT?

2:47

PAUL:

NO I DIDN'T SEE IT AS POSING A CONFLICT. I MADE A POINT, AS IVE SAID IN PUBLIC, TO PUT IT ON THE TABLE TO SAY THAT I WAS JEWISH. I DIDN'T WANT ANYBODY TO FEEL THAT AFTER 3 OR 4 INTERVIEWS THEY WERE SUDDENLY SURPRISED THAT I WAS JEWISH. THERE'S NOTHING IM ASHAMED OF, IM HAPPY TO TALK ABOUT IT. I FOUND THAT IT WAS ACTUALLY A USEFUL TOOL FOR CATALYZING CONVERSATION AND GETTING PPL TO REACT TO THE FACT THAT I WAS JEWISH. AND ASKING ME QUES ABOUT WHAT THAT MEANT AND WHAT MY VIEWS ON ISREAL WERE AND SO FORTH. THIS WASN'T JUST A QUICK TURN AROUND NEWSPAPER STORY, THIS IS SOMETHING WHERE I WAS SEEKING TO HAVE MANY CONVERSATIONS WITH PPL TO GET DEEP INTO THEIR BACKGROUNDS. THE FACT THAT I WAS JEWISH ACTUALLY HELPED GALVANIZE THOSE TYPES OF CONVERSAIONS. I DIDN'T FELT IT WAS A CONFLICT AT ALL, AND I WAS VERY STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT WHILE I DID ENCOUNTER SOME ANTI-SEMITIC ATTITUDES, PPL WHO WOULD TELL ME HOW THE US GOVT IS CONTROLLED BY A SECRET ZIONIST KABAL. I REALLY DIDN'T REALLY ENCOUNTER SO MUCH ANTI-SEMITISM THAT I COULDN'T SORT OUT WHAT OTHER PPLS VIEWS WERE AND I ENCOUNTERED MANY PPL, AMONG MUSLIM AMERICANS WHO WHILE THEY MAY BE SKEPTICAL, OR ANTAGONISTIC TWD ISREAL WERE CLEARLY NOT ANTI-SEMITIC, THEY COULD SEPARAT OUT JEWS FROM ISREAL.

GERI: TALK ABOUT THE WIDE RANGE OF MUSLIM AMERICANS THAT YOU ENCOUNTERED.

4:10

PAUL

THIS IS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES OF THE BOOK ITS CAPTURED EVEN BY THE COVER OF THE BOOK, WHICH HAS PORTRAITS OF 7 INDIVIDUAL PPL, PART OF WHAT IM TRYING TO GET ACROSS THERE IS THAT MUSLIM AMERICANS ARE THE OPPOSITE OF MONOLITHIC IN THEIR EXPERIENCES AND THEIR VIEWS. YOU HAVE PPL FROM THE MID EAST, SOUTH ASIA, PAKISTAN INDIA PRIMARILY, YOU HAVE AFRICAN AMERICAN CONVERTS TO THE RELIGION, YOU HAVE WHITE AMERICAN CONVERTS, THE ATTITUDES THEY HAVE OFTEN VARY OFTEN VARY AND CLASH. AND MY BOOK FOCUSES A LOT ON THE CONFLICT WITHIN AMERICAN ISLAM AS MUSLIMS SORT OUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BOTH MUSLIM AND AMERICAN TODAY. BY LOOKING AT THOSE CONFLICTS, I THINK YOU CAN GAIN A LOT OF INSIGHT AS TO WHAT MUSLIMS THINK AND SEE HOW MUCH VARIETY THERE IS AND SEE THEY ARE TRULY ON MONOLITHIC IN THEIR VIEWS

GERI: BOOK IS SUBTITLED, THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOULD OF THE RELIGION SO WHO'S WINNING THIS STRUGGLE?

5:05

PAUL:

IT ISNT A STRUGGLE WITH TWO SIDES LIKE A WRESTLING MATCH WHERE ONE SIDE IS GOING TO SWAMP THE OTHER. THERE CERTAINLY ARE DIFFERENT CURRENTS OF THOUGHT, AND I WOULD SAY THAT THE MAIN CURRENT OF THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE IN MUSLIM AMERICA IS ONE OF ASSIMILATION. BY ALMOST ANY MEASURE, MUSLIMS AS A GRP, NOT NEC EVERY SINGLE MUSLIM, MUSLIMS AS A GRP ARE INTEGRATING INTO AMERICAN SOCIETY AND DOING SO SUCCESSFULLY. AS A GRP THEY ARE BETTER EDUCATED THAN AMERICANS OVERALL IN TERMS OF THE % OF THOSE WHO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE, AS A GRP THEY ARE MORE PROSPEROUS THAN AMERICANS OVERALL AS MEASURED BY MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME AND THEY ARE EVEN REGISTERED TO VOTE IN HIGHER PERCENTAGES THAN AMERICANS OVERALL. SO BY THOSE AND MANY OTHER MEASURES WE'RE WITNESSING THE LATEST OF MANY OF WHAT HAS REALLY BEEN MANY IMMIGRATION STORIES TO THIS COUNTRY AND OTHERS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS LARGE AND CAPACIOUS SOCIETY, MUSLIMS ARE TOO.

GERI: SO YOU ARE COVERING STORIES THAT AREN'T NEARLY COVERED BY THE MEDIA.

6:06

PAUL:

I THINK THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK I'M TRYING TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER, RATHER THAN SET UP THE DYNAMIC THAT I THINK IS VERY COMMON, THAT IS, JOURNALISM THAT EITHER TRIES TO PROSECUTE MUSLIMS, OR DEFEND AND APOLOGIZE ON BEHALF OF MUSLIMS I'M TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT. I'M TRYING TO UNDERSTAND MUSLIMS, SEE THINGS THROUGH THEIR EYES, NOT BECAUSE I WOULD APPROVE OF EVERYTHING THEY THINK OR SAY BUT BECAUSE I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY THINK FOR REAL. WITHOUT STARTING OUT WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE HAVE A WHOLE BUNCH OF PEOPLE WHO ARE DISLOYAL AND A HUGE PROBLEM, OR ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE A BUNCH OF PEOPLE WHO ARE ENTIRELY INNOCENT, ARE IN ADHERENCE TO A RELIGION ONLY DEVOTED TO PEACE LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING, THE WORLD IS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT. IT'S MORE COMPLICATED FOR MUSLIMS, FOR CHRISTIANS AND FOR JEWS, ETC

GERI: THE LAST CHAPTER OF YOUR BOOK, THE WAY AHEAD, CAN YOU TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT YOU PERSCRIBED, OR MAYBE HEAL THE MISPERCEPTIONS?

7:24

PAUL:

I TALK IN THAT CHAPTER ABOUT STEPS THAT MUSLIMS AND NON MUSLIMS CAN TAKE. I THINK THE MAJORITY OF MUSLIMS ARE RELATIVELY MODERATE IN THEIR VIEWS, BOTH IN TERMS OF RELIGION AND POLITICS. NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POTENTIAL FOR DANGER ON THE FRINGE, AND THEY ARE IN THE BEST POSITION TO PULL PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXTREME IDEAS INTO THE LARGER FOLD. THEY ARE AWARE OF WHO THEY ARE, THEY CAN HEAR THE DANGER SIGNS BEFORE NON MUSLIMS CAN HEAR THEM. SO THAT IS ONE EXAMPLE OF WHAT MUSLIMS CAN DO TO STEP UP AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE REST OF US HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES TOO, AND I THINK THERE ARE SPECIFIC, OFTEN SYMBOLIC THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE TO MAKE MUSLIMS FEEL LESS ALIENATED AND TO REINFORCE THE ASSIMILATION

PROCESS. FOR EX, IT IS VERY COMMON AMONG CERTAIN CHRISTIAN EVANGELICAL PREACHERS TO JUST CASUALLY DISPARAGE THE RELIGION OF ISLAM, OF MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR, AND FIGURES SUCH AS THE PROPHET MOHAMED, REFERRING TO THE PROPHET AS A PETIFILE, ANNOUNCING THAT ISLAM IS AN EVIL AND WICKED RELIGION AND SO FORTH. THE FACT THAT POLITICAL ALLIES OF THE PREACHERS, PARTICULARLY REPUBLICAN POLITICIANS, INCLUDING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION DON'T REGULARLY CONDEMN THAT OR BASICALLY ORDER THOSE PPL TO CUT THAT OUT, IS SOMETHING THAT MUSLIMS ARE AWARE OF AND A VERY SIMPLE THING THAT PPL CAN DO TO SEND A BIG SYMBOLIC MSG THAT YOU'RE PART OF THE COUNTRY, YOU'RE PART OF US.

GERI:

OUR DOC IS ABOUT COVERING AND COVERAGE OF THE ARAB AM COMMUNITY IN METRO DETROIT. WHAT COULD YOU TELL JOURNALISTS TO DO TO BETTER COVER.

9:07

PAUL:

YEH I THINK THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION BC THERE ARE CONCRETE THINGS THAT JOURNALISTS CAN DO ITS REALLY AN EXTENSION OF YOUR LAST QUES. I THINK WHAT JOURNALISTS CAN DO MORE OFTEN IS COVER THE PARTICULAR RATHER THAN THE GENERAL. RATHER THAN GOING TO A SERVICE AND COVERING A SERMON BY AN IMAN, SPENDING TIME WITH THE CONGRERATES OF THE IMAN AND SEEING WHAT THEIR LIVES ARE LIKE IN SOME DETAIL. I ACTUALLY THINK THAT THERE IS MUCH TO BE LEARNED IN THE ORDINARY LIVES OF MUSLIMS IN CONTRAST TO THE SPEECHES THAT MAY BE MADE AT FRI JUMA SERVICES OR WHAT MIGHT GET SAID AT A PANEL DISCUSSION WHEN PPL ARE YELLING AT EA OTHER OVER THE US RELATIONS W ISREAL. I THINK THAT JOURNALISTS WOULD BE ABLE TO BRING TO THE SURFACE, BOTH PROBLEMS, ALIENATION, POTENTIALLY EXTREME THOUGHT, BUT ALSO A LOT OF MORE HEARTENING STORIES, BUT ALL OF IT IN A MORE COMPLEX AND RICH SENSE AS SEEN THROUGH THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS. THAT'S THE SORT OF GROUND LEVEL JOURNALISM THAT I HAVE DONE OVER THE YRS. AND I THINK COVERAGE OF MUSLIM AMERICANS WOULD BENEFIT FROM MORE OF THAT KIND OF JOURNALISM.

GERI: IN TERMS OF TALKING TO BEGINNING JOURNALISTS, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY THAT REALLY OPENED YOUR EYES? HOW WOULD YOU TELL STUDENT JOURNALISTS WHAT TYPES OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH WOULD YOU SUGGEST?

10:36

PAUL:

WELL BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFO ABOUT MUSLIMS IS MISUNDERSTOOD OR NOT KNOWN AT ALL. THE EX THAT MOST MUSLIMS ARE NOT OF ARAB DECENT THE BIGGEST SUB GROUPS OF MUSLIMS ARE ACTUALLY SOUTH ASIA. ARAB CLERGY ARE OFTEN PRESENTED AS THE SPOKESMAN FOR ALL OF AMERICAN ISLAM. SOMETHING THAT YOUNG JOURNALISTS COULD DO WOULD BE TO SEEK OUT THE MUCH MORE COMPLEX DEMOGRAPHIC TAPESTRY THAT EXISTS WITHIN AMERICAN ISLAM. ANOTHER EX IS, MOST NON MUSLIM AMERICANS ASSUME THAT THE NATION OF ISLAM, A BLACK SEPARATIST ORG, STILL PREDOMINATES IN BLACK ISLAM. THAT'S NOT THE CASE, AND HASN'T BEEN IN SOME YRS. MOST BLACK MUSLIMS HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM THE NATION OF ISLAM. AND NOW FOLLOW INDEPENDENT BLACK CLERGY OR THEY ATTEND MOSQUES THAT HAVE A CONGREGATION W MIXED ETHNICITES. THE GRADUAL DISAPPERANCE OF THE NATION OF ISLAM IS AN UNDERCOVERED STORY, WHERE AFRICAN AMERICAN ISLAM HAS GONE IN THE FUTURE IS VERY FASCINATING QUES. ONE OF MY CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK IS AN EX OF ONE OF THESE INDEPENDENT BLACK MUSLIM LEADERS FROM BEDFORD STYVESANT IN BROOKLYN. THERE ARE A LOT OF CHARACTERS OUT THERE WHO AMERICANS OUGHT TO MEET. THAT YOUNG JOURNALISTS COULD GO AND FIND THOSE CHARACTERS, PAINT PROTRAITS OF THEM AND GIVE THOSE TO READERS AND VIEWERS AND I THINK THAT WILL BE OF TREMENDOUS VALUE.

GERI: THE STARTING PT OF OUR DOC IS HOW HAS COVERAGE CHANGED SINCE 9-11, AS A JOURNALISTS FOR 18 SOME YRS, DID YOU SEE A SHIFT IN COVERAGE?

12:19

PAUL:

YES. IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF 9-11 ALMOST ALL OF THE COVERAGE WAS BASICALLY ON TWO TOPICS: WHERE ARE TERRORISTS, ARE THERE TERRORISTS, WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE EX OF FALL OUT FOR MUSLIMS IN THE WAKE OF THE CALAMITY. WHOS BEING SNATCHED UP OFF THE ST AND PUT IN JAIL, WHO'S WORRIED ABOUT HAVING HER HIJAB TORN OFF, ETC. I THINK OVER THE LAST 5 YRS COVERAGE HAS BROADENED AND NOW YOU REGULARLY SEE COVERAGE OF MUCH MORE KIND OF NORMAL MUSLIM LIFE. RECENT FRONT PAGE OF THE NYT SUN EDITION IT HAD A LONG PROFILE OF AN EGYPTIAN AMERICAN IMAN, WHO HAD LEAD A CONGREGATION IN THE INNER CITY, A VERY POOR CONGREGATION FOR WHO RELIGION WAS EVERYTHING AND LIFE WAS VERY TIGHTLY ORGANIZED AROUND THE MOSQUE. HE HAD RECENTLY MOVED TO THE SUBURBS WHERE HIS CONGREGATION WAS MUCH BETTER OFF, AN EX OF MUSLIMS MOVING UP AND OUT FROM THE CITY NTO A SUBURBAN SETTING. RELIGION WAS ACTUALLY BECOMING LESS OF AN ELEMENT OF THEIR LIFE AND HE WAS STRUGGLING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HIS NEW ROLE WAS. IT WAS A VERY INTERESTING STORY, I CERTAINLY LEARNED FROM IT BY READING IT, AND I THINK IT IS AN EX OF HOW JOURNALISTS ARE BEGINNING TO VENTURE FURTHER INTO MUSLIM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES TO GET AT MORE NORMALIZED ASPECT OF MUSLIM AMERICAN LIFE, NOT JUST THE FALL OUT FROM 9-11 AS IMPORTANT AS THAT SUBJECT IS AND WAS

GERI: ARE THERE CERTAIN JOURNALISTS THAT ARE MORE GUILTY OF COVERING THE ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN A SUPERFICIAL MANNER?

14:04

PAUL: WELL JOURNALISM LIKE MOST INSTITUTIONS IS HIGHLY INPERFECT. THERE'S A LOT OF JUNKY JOURNALISM COMMITTED EVERY DAY AND EVERY WK, JUST AS THERE IS SOME EXCELLENT JOURNALISM COMMITTED, THAT'S NOT GOING TO BE DIFFERENT AS IT PERTAINS TO THIS SUBJECT AS OPPOSED TO COVERAGE OF NATIONAL POLITICS, WALL ST, OR ANY NUMER OF OTHER TOPICS. ITS NOTHING TO CELEBRATE, BUT IT'S A FACT OF LIFE.

MAN QUES: IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY PRINT JOURNALISM AND BROADCAST JOURNALISM HAS DEALT WITH THIS ISSUE?

14:46

PAUL:

IVE SEEN EX OF GOOD AND BAD COVERAGE IN BOTH MEDIA. I THINK MOST OF THE VEST COVERAGE THAT I HAVE SEEN ON TV HAS TENDED TO BE ON PUBLIC TELEVISION AND I THINK TV COVERAGE IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO HAVING THE CAMERA FIND THE LOUDES AND SHRILLET SOUNING PROPORTED SPOKESMAN FOR THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY. OFTEN THE CAMERAS ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE IN A TRADITIONAL COSTUME WHO SPEAKS ARABIC, AND THAT PERSON MAY NOT BE PARTICULARLY REPRESENTATIVE, HE MAY EVEN BE THE IMAM OF A MOSQUE BUT HE MAY NOT REPRESENT IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY, THE VIEWS AND THE EXPERIENCES OF A MUCH LARGER MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THAT CITY OR TOWN. WITH THAT SAID, I HAVE SEEN GOOD TV PIECES ON THESE SUBJECTS AND IM NOT A PERSON, ALTHOUGH I AM A PRINT PERSON, WHOS SAYS ALL TV BAD, PRINT GOOD. THAT'S JUST NOT THE CASE.

MAN QUES:

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY WE COVER MUSLIMS IN AMERICAN VS THE REST OF THE WORLD?

15:57

PAUL:

WELL I WOULD BREAK THE QUESTION DOWN. IT IS A VERY GOOD QUESTION. THERE ARE VERY DISTNINCT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MUSLIMS IN THIS COUNTRY AND MUSLIMS IN THE REST OF THE WORLD. I MEAN THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS RELATIVELY ASSIMILATED POPULATION IN THIS COUNTRY AND THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN WESTERN EUROPE, WHICH IS OVER ALL POOR, MORE ISOLATED MORE INSULAR AND BOTH OF THOSE POPULATIONS ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE POP OF THE MID EAST AND SOUTH ASIA. SADLY, PARTICULARLY THE MID EAST IS AN ENTIRE REGION RIVEN WITH REAL VIOLENCE AND STRIFE AND ITS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE HOW THAT IS NOT GOING TO GET COVERED. I MEAN PPL ARE GETTING KILLED AND CAR BOMBS ARE BLOWING UP, PPL WANNA KNOW ABOUT IT, PPL

NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT WITH 150 THOUSAND OR MORE AMERICAN TROOPS IN IRAQ, THAT'S GONNA GET COVERED. THAT'S NOW GOING TO TELL YOU A LOT ABOUT THE GREAT TRADITIONS AND THE ORDINARY LIVES OF MUSLIM AMERICANS IN IRAQ OR ANOTHER COUNTRY. I THINK IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR JOURNALISTS COVERING THIS SUBJECT TO MAKE THE DISTINCTIONS. TO NOT MAKE IT SOUND LIKE MUSLIMS HERE HAVE THE SAME IDEAS AS MUSLIMS IN IRAQ OR EGYPT OR PAKISTAN. IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES ARE VERY DIFFERENT. AND WHEN I THINK ABOUT WHAT IS THE UN OF MUSLIMS WHICH EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY. MUSLIMS FROM ALL OVER WHO HAVE CONVERGED HERE WE AS JOURNALISTS SHOULD MAKE AN EXTRA EFFORT TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE ABOUT OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS, AS OPPOSED TO MUSLIMS WHO ARE FINDING THEIR WAY, OR NOT FINDING THEIR WAY IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

18:00

CLOSE UP OF AMERICAN ISLAM BOOK IN BACKGROUND BEHIND PAUL, AND BACK OUT

18:15

PAUL:

NO, WELL I HAVE 4 SELECTIONS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BOOK AND A LITTLE BIT OF INTERSTITIAL MATERIAL KIND OF EXPLAINING WHAT IT'S ABOUT. I START WITH A CHAPTER ON MORGANSTOWN WEST VA AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE WHEN A WOMAN ANNOUNCED SHE WAS GOING TO PRAY IN THE SAME PRAYER HALL AS THE MEN IN A MOSQUE AND IT WAS NOT ALLOWED. I'M GOING TO READ A BIT ON THE CHAPTER ON DEARBORN.

18:39

CHEST SHOT AND HANDS (PAUL)

GERI: HOW LONG WERE YOU IN DEARBORN?

18:43

PAUL: WELL I CAME AND WENT, I DIDN'T JUST COME AND PARK HERE. I MAY I MADE ABOUT 5 TRIPS HERE RANGING FROM A COUPLE OF DAYS TO 4 DAYS. IT'S OFTEN GOOD TO DIP IN AND THEN THINK OF

NEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT, YOU'VE MET A HALF DOZEN PPL AND THESE TWO ARE REALLY THE PPL I NEED TO DEVELOP. THESE GUYS WERE GREAT THEY WERE VERY HELPFUL BUT I'LL PUSH THE OVER HERE. SO NEXT TIME YOU COME BACK AND FOCUS ON THE ONES YOU REALLY WANT.

ALBERS?:

WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF DEARBORN?

19:18

PAUL: IT'S A FASCINATING PLACE. LIKE MANY FASCINATING PLACES YOU CAN LOOK AT IT FROM DIFFERENT VANTAGE PTS. YOU CAN SEE THE PLACE AS BEING RELATIVELY INSULAR WITH PPL WHO SEEM TO BE CREATING THE OLD COUNTRY. YOU TAKE A FEW STEPS BACK FROM THAT AND TAKE A LOOK AT IT HISTORICALLY OVER TIME, NOT JUST A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT EXISTS RIGHT NOW, YOU REALIZE HOW EFFICIENT THE PLACE HAS BEEN AS AN IMMIGRATION MACHINE OF PULLING PPL THROUGH. THE EXPERIENCE OF COMING OVER HERE, MANY PPL W/O A LOT OF SKILLS GETTING EITHER EDU OR FACTORY JOBS, MOVING FROM THE SOUTH END TO EAST DEARBORN AND OFTEN TIMES FURTHER OUT INTO THE SUBURBS. YOU CAN SEE THE GREAT AMERICAN IMMIGRATION MACHINE AND WORK. EVEN IF AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT AND YOU GO ONTO WARREN AVE AND DUCK INTO A BAKERY YOU CAN HEAR PPL WHO SOUND VERY BITTER, THERE'S NO WAY THEY'RE EVER GONNA FIT INTO AMERICAN SOCIETY, BUT MY FEELING ON THAT IS, COME BACK IN A FEW YRS MAYBE TALK TO THEIR CHILDREN 10 YRS LATER, AND YOU'LL HEAR A VERY DIFFERENT STORY. YOU HAVE SEVERAL NEW POPULATIONS THAT HAVE JUST ARRIVED IN THE LAST 10 YRS. BOTH THE IRAQI POPULATION, AND NOW THE GRP THAT NOW DOMINATES IN THE NEW SOUTH END WHICH IS THE YEMENE IMMIGRANTS, SOME OF THEM ARE ACTUALLY ASSEMBLING THE FORD 150 PICK UP TRUCKS THAT ARE STILL BEING BUILT AT THE OLD FORD ROUGE PLANT. THE IDEA THAT MUSLIMS HAVE BEEN COMING, ARABS IN MORE RECENT TIMES, TO THIS ONE SMALL CITY, TO ASSEMBLE CARS, FOR ALMOST A CENTURY IS A PRETTY EXTRAORDINARY THING.

ALBERS: WHEN YOU WERE THERE WHAT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WAS THERE BETWEEN THE PRESS AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY?

PAUL: THE PRESS YOU MEAN LIKE THE LOCAL PRESS?

ALBERS: YES

21:40

PAUL:

IT VARIED. AT TIMES SATISFACTORY, OTHER TIMES A SOURCE OF FRUSTRATION. THE PRESS IS A VERY ROUGH AND TUMBLE, IMPERFECT INSTITUTION. THAT'S NOT NEC GOING TO COVER SUBJECTS IN A STEADY THOROUGH SYSTEMATIC WAY. ITS NOT REALLY THE FAULT OF ANY ONE PERSON, NO ONE REALLY INTENDS FOR IT TO BE THAT WAY. BUT THE GUY THE KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT DEARBORN, AND MAY REALLY HAVE SOME INSIGHT WILL FOR WKS ON END GET PULLED AWAY TO OTHER THINGS. I THINK IT IS VERY HARD TO GENERALIZE. IF YOU GO AND YOU ASK THAT QUES TO A GRP OF DEARBORN RESIDENTS OR FORMER DEARBORN RESIDENTS, THOSE THAT HAVE MOVED ON BUT STILL SEE DEARBORN AS THEIR CENTER, YOU WILL GET MOSTLY NEGATIVE REACTIONS, BUT FOR THAT MATTER, WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU ASK ANY GRP OF AMERICANS – SO HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE WAY THE MEDIA COVERS YOUR TOWN YOUR INDUSTRY, YOUR BLOCK? OOHHTHOSE BASTARDS THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT THE JUST WANT TO START CONFLICT, THEY JUST WANT SENSATION. OFTEN TIMES THAT DOES DESCRIBE WHAT THE MEDIA IS DOING, BUT IT ACTUALLY DOESN'T DESCRIBE AT ALL WHAT THE MEDIA IS DOING. I MEAN LOOK AT THE SERIES ENTERPRISE HERE, WHERE YOU ASK A PERSON A SERIES OF DETAILED QUESTIONS, TAKING LONG ANSWERS, WHICH IM SURE YOU ARE VERY CAREFULLY GOING TO STITCH TOGETHER. IT'S A MIXTURE.

23:20

AMERICAN ISLAM BOOK CU
ZOOM IN AND OUT
CU OF BOOK COVER (BOTTOM TO TOP)

24:45

ZOOM OUT FROM BOOK TO PAUL SPEAKING (NO AUDIO-VERY LOW)

PAUL TALKS ABOUT BOOK:

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READS FROM BOOK:

26:44

...9-11, AFTER ENCOURAGING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN A FRIGHTENED ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND THE FBI. HE HELPED SET UP MONTHLY MTGS IN DETROIT, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY REPS DISCUSSED CONCERNS ABOUT TERRORIST INVESTIGATIONS AND HATE CRIMES. THIS QUIET COOPERATION IMPROVED ARAB AMERICAN COMPLIANCE W VOLUNTARY QUESTIONING BY THE GOV AND PROVIDED A FORUM FOR RECTIFYING INVESTIGATIVE EXCESSES. IN 2003, A GRATEFUL FBI CALLED HAMAD TO SAY HE HAD RECEIVED AN EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD FOR HIS CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE. HAMAD'S CO-HONORARY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE LATE MADELINE SWEENEY, A FLIGHT ATTENDANT ON ONE OF THE HIJACKED PLANES THAT STRUCK THE WTC. SWEENEY HAD HAD THE PRESENCE OF MIND TO CALL THE FBI ON A MOBILE PHONE AND DESCRIBE THE HIJACKERS, THE FIRST STEP IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ATROSYTY. THE SYMBOLISM WOULD BE POTENT JUXTAPOSING THE HEROIC MEMORY OF SWEENEY WITH A SHORT PALESTINIAN IMMIGRANT WHO WEARS A SCRUFFY BEARD, SPEAKS WITH AN ARABIC ACCENT, AND CARRIES MUSLIM PRAYER BEATS. OSAMA SUMBLANI, THE PUBLISHER OF THE WKLY NEWSPAPER THE ARAB AMERICAN NEWS IN DEARBORN TOLD HAMAD TO TURN IT DOWN. "ARAB CIVIL RIGHTS GRPS SHOULD NOT BE IN BED W THE FBI OR W THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES" THE PUBLISHER LATER TOLD ME RECOUNTING HIS ADVICE. THEY SHOULD BE A WATCH DOG AND ALWAYS MAINTAIN A DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM AND THE SECURITY OFFICIALS. HE WORRIED THAT HAMAD, WHO WAS A FRIEND OF HIS, WOULD BE SEEN TO HIS CONSTITUENCY AS A LOYAL FBI BOY. HAMAD WAS WILLING TO TAKE THAT RISK. HE ARRANGED TO FLY TO WASHINGTON, AT GOV EXPENSE, TO PICK UP THE AWARD. BUT THEN A FRINGE JEWISH GRP, THE ZIONIST ORG OF AMERICA ALONG W A CONSERVATIVE COLUMNIST DEBBIE SCHUTZL, WRITING IN THE

NEW YORK POST RAISED THE OLD PALESTINIAN ALLEGATIONS. THE PUBLICLY CONSCIOUS FBI RECALLED THE AWARD OFFER, WHILE REITERATING THAT IT COMMENDED HAMAD FOR QUOTE "BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN MUSLIM AMERICANS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT." THE BRAVE MADELLINE SWEENEY WOULD BE THE FBI'S SOLE HONORARY. HAMAD TOOK THE WHOLE THING IN STRIDE. HE LAUGHED THAT PERHAPS HE NEEDED A TV REALITY SHOW LIKE EXTREME MAKE OVER TO LOOSE THE TERRORIST IMAGE. MORE SERIOUSLY HE SAID QUOTE "THE FACT THAT IM A NOMINEE, IM STILL PROUD OF IT. I USE IT LIKE AN EMMY AWARD, A NOMINEE FOR THIS, I WAS THERE, I WAS ON THE LIST." SURE SOME ACQUAINTANCES SAID HE DESERVED THE HUMILIATION FOR FOOLISHLY TRUSTING THE GOV BUT HE DIDN'T FEEL HUMILIATED. MS SWEENEY SACRIFICED HER LIFE, HE SAID, SHE DESERVES AN AWARD MORE THAN I DO.

29:27

PAUL:

WHAT I TRY TO DO IN THE BOOK IS BRING CHARACTERS LIKE HAMAD TO LIFE IN 3 DIMENSIONS SO YOU CAN SEE A COMPLICATED GUY IN ALL OF HIS ASPECTS. IN FACT HAMAD IS SOMEONE WHO SYMPATHIZES WITH GRPS LIKE HAMAS. HE DOES ROOT FOR THEM VS THE STATE OF ISREAL AND AT THE SAME TIME HE IS ALSO A GUY THAT IS WORKING WITH THE FBI AND TRYING TO A BRIDGE BETWEEN FED LAW ENFORCEMENT AND HIS NEIGHBORS. IT IS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY IN A SENTENCE WHAT THIS GUY IS ALL ABOUT. WHAT I TRY TO DO IN THIS BOOK IS INTRODUCE YOU TO THESE CHARACTERS, NOT ONLY IN DEARBORN BUT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, NORTHERN CALI TO FOOTHILLS OF APPA MTS. TO TRY TO PERSUADE YOU THAT IN FACT THERE IS MUCH MORE TO LEARN ABOUT THIS EXTREMELY VARIED POPULATION OF AMERICANS. SO IVE NEVER CONFRONTED THIS SITUATION BEFORE IN EITHER OF MY 2 BOOKS AND I AM HAPPY TO DO WHATEVER THE LACK OF ASSEMBLY WOULD LIKE ME TO DO.

30:34

CU SHOTS OF PAUL

30:41

EVEN, MY FRIEND HAMAD, WHO WAS NOT HUMILIATED, THE GUY THAT IS ACTUALLY A COLLEAGUE OF MINE WHO WAS GONNA SHOW UP AND WAS SUPPOSEDLY GONNA DRIVE ME BACK TO DEARBORN ISNT EVEN HERE. SO I MAY JUST WANDERING THE ST'S OF AA TONIGHT, PAN HANDLING, IF NOT WORSE.

QUESTION: I DUNNO WHY I WAS SURPRISED, BUT I FOUND THE QUESTIONS OF SUFFISM SO PROVOCATIVE

PAUL: SURPRISING TO YOU BC SUFFISM IN MANY WAYS SEEMS VERY FAMILIAR LIKE OTHER SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT THAT YOU'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT.

QUESTION:... THE ATTRACTION? IN THE COMMUNITY

31:45

PAUL:

EXCELLENT QUESTION. IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT IT DOES SEEM VERY PECULIAR THAT SUFFIS OF ALL PPL WOULD BE THE SOURCE OF CONTROVERSEY, ABSOLUTELY. AND THIS IS ONE OF MANY EXAMPLES OF HOW SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT FROM ABROAD ARE IMPORTED HERE AND DROPPED DOWN INTO THE AMERICAN CONTINENT. IN FACT, SOME MUSLIMS HAVE VIEWED SUFIS A LITTLE BETTER THAT CULTIST, THIS IS IN PART BC SUFI'S GENERALLY ATTCH THEMSELVES SHEIKS, TEACHERS WHO THEY EMMULATE IN A MODEL THAT IS SIMILAR TO MODELS YOU SEE IN HINDUISM FOR EX. THIS IS A GURU LIKE FIGURE WHO HAS SOMETHING OF THE DIVIND LIGHT IN HIS EYE. A CONCEPT THAT MANY MUSLIMS THINK IS BLASPHEMOUS AND IT IS THAT BASIC RESENTMENT BROUGHT HERE FROM PLACES LIKE SAUDI ARABIA FOR EX, WHERE SUFFIS ARE PERSECUTED. THAT IS WHY IT IS NOT UNLIKELY TO GO TO MOSQUE AND THE HEAR THE IMAM PREACHING AGAINST SUFIS, NOT AGAINST THE JEWS, BUT THE CULTISTS, THOSE WHO WORSHIP MEN, THOSE WHO WORSHIP AT TOMBS. IN FACT IT IS QUITE COMMON IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD WHERE SUFFISM IS PREVALENT FOR SUFFIS TO GO TO SHRINES AND TOMBS OF SHEIKS FROM EARLIER AGES WHERE THEY WILL PRAY AND MEDITATE AND SO FORTH. SOME MUSLIMS SEE THAT AS BLASPHEMOUS, IM SURE YOU'VE HEARD OF

WAHABISM, THE STRAIN OF ISLAM IN SAUDI ARABIA. THE WAHABIS ARE DIRVEN WILD BY SUFIS AND U HEAR SOME OF THAT IN THIS COUNTRY. EVEN THOUGH, BY ANY ANALYSIS, IT IS A MIS PLACED HOSTILITY

QUESTION: IM GLAD YOU MENTIONED IT, WAHABIST ISSUE. I WAS ALSO SURPRISED THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAUDI ARABIA UNDERWRITES...JUST THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES. HOW SUCCESSFULLY HAS THAT BEEN DISSEMINATED OR HOW IS THAT REGARDED IN A MORE HOLISTIC SETTINGIT MADE ME THINK OF EVANGELICAL MEGA CHURCHES.. FINANCIAL DEPT.

34:35

PAUL:

NO IT'S A VERY SUBTLE AND COMPLEX SUBJECT AND YOUR SUGGESTION THAT MANY MUSLIMS IN THIS COUNTRY MAY NOT EVEN BE AWARE THAT THEY ARE INFLUENCED BY THE WAHABI APPROACH IS IN FACT ENTIRELY TRUE. THAT IS THE CAS FOR SEVERAL REASONS. ONE, SAUDI ARABI TRAINS MANY IMANS, SO YOU MIGHT HAVE A CLERGYMAN FROM PAKISTAN, OR EGYPT WHO HAS GONE BY WAY OF MECCA OR MEDINA OVER TO THIS COUNTRY. SO HE MIGHT SAY, O IM A PAKISTANI THERE IS ONLY ONE ISLAM AND I PREACH THE TRUE ISLAM. BUT ANY TIME YOU HEAR SOMEONE MAKING A BIG DEAL ABOUT TERE BEING ONLY ONE TRUE ISLAM AND ANYONE WHO DISAGREES WITH THAT OR DOESN'T WANNA TALK ABOUT IT IS AN INFIDEL, THAT'S PROBABLY SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN TRAINED WAHABISM IS A CONTROVERSIAL TERM, SOMETIMES PPL USE THE WORD, SALIFISM, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THESE LABELS. FOR EX SAUDIS DISOWN THE TERM WAHABISM, THEY SAY IT DOESN'T EXIST THERE IS NO SUCH THING. BUT THE WORSHIPPERS IN THAT MOSQUE MAY HAVE NO IDEA HOW SOMEONE FROM THEIR OWN COUNTRY, PAKISTAN, JORDAN, EGYPT, SECOND SOURCE OF INFLUENCE, LITERATURE HUGE VOLUMES OF LIT FOUND IN MOSQUES AND ISLAMIC CENTERS COMES FROM PUBLISHERS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THAT LIT CAN BE EFFECTED IN VERY SUBTLE WAYS, FOOT NOTES, INSERTED BRACKETS THAT ACTUALLY ADD WORDS THAT ARENT IN THE ORIGINAL HOLY TEXT WHETHER IT IS THE KORAN OR THE HADITH. THE HADITH IS THE COLLECTION OF SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET. THE CLASSIC EX OF THIS IS HOW THE

TERM JIHAD WILL BE DISCUSSED. IT MAY BE REFERENCE TO THE WORD JIHAD AND IT MA BE AMBIGUOUS AS TO WHAT EXACTLY TH TERM MEANS AND YOU'LL SEE AND INSERTION THAT SAYS FIGHTING WITH WEAPONS AND MACHINES OF WAR. NOW THAT'S FROM THE PUBLISHER, NOT SOMEONE PUBLISHING WHAT MOHAMMED ONCE SAID. I DEAL W THAT ISSUE VERY SPECIFICALLY IN FACT IN THE CHAP THAT HAS TO DO WITH THE SUFI'S WHO ARE VERY RESENTFUL OF THE WAHABI INFLUENCE. THERE'S A SCENE IN THE BOOK OF THIS WHITE CONVERT SUFI FAMILY STRUGGLING TO FIND A COLLECTION OF HADDITH THAT IS NOT POLLUTED BY THIS INFLUENCE AND JUST BEING BASICALLY THWARTED IN FRONT OF EVERYONE. WE WANT TO BUY BOOKS TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN OUR FAITH AND ALL WE CAN FIND ARE THESE AUTHORED VERSIONS, AND THEY'RE SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH TO KNOW THEY ARE ALTERED BUT THEY'D LIKE TO HAVE THE BASIC TEXT. IT'S A VERY FASCINATING SITUATION. THE DEGREE TO WHICH THIS INFLUENCES MUSLIMS IS ITSELF A SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSEY. SOME MUSLIMS WILL DISPUTE EVERYTHING I SAY IN A KIND OF DON'T HANG THE DIRTY LAUNDRY OUT, PRIVATELY THEY MAY ACKNOLEDGE THAT MUCH OF IT'S TRUE. OF COURSE PPL WHO ARE IN ADHERENCE OF THIS MORE AUSTERE AND TOLERANT VERSION OF THE RELIGION WILL DENY EVERYTHING I AM SAYING BECAUSE AGAIN, THERE IS ONLY ONE ISLAM AND ANYONE WHO IS RAISING ANY QUESTIONS IS TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE ONE TRUE ISLAM. SO YOU DON'T FIN AGREEMENT ON THIS. IT IS A SOURCE OF CONTROVERSEY ON TOP OF CONTROVERSEY. AND ITS ONE OF THE CHALLENGES FACING RELIGION IN THIS COUNTRY.

QUESTION:

DO FIND THESE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES?? I AGREE WITH YOUR CLAIM THAT IN THE US THAT ... NOT A CENTRALIZED STATE YOU ARE UNLIKELY TO FIND ... BUT I WAS ALSO CURIOUS ON THE BASIS OF YOUR RESEARCH TALKING TO THESE COMMUNITIES, AN INCREASE IN THE URGE TO MAKE A COMMON CAUSE AMONGST COMMUNITIES THAT OTHERWISE MIGHT BE IN SOME DISPUTE... A DEFAULT HOMOGENIZATION OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN GENERAL.

36:06

PAUL:

YOU CERTAINLY SEE A TENDENCY THAT APPEARS HISTORICALLY IN THIS COUNTRY WITH ALL KINDS OF IMMIGRANT MINORITY RELIGIOUS GRPS, WHICH IS THE SECOND GENERATION TO USE YOUR TERM, MAKING AN EFFORT TO FIND COMMON CAUSE AND TO ASSERT THEIR IDENTITY AS MUSLIMS RATHER THAN SAY PAKISTANI IMMIGRANTS OR EGYPTIAN IMMIGRANTS OR SAUDI IMMIGRANTS. THESE ARE SOMETIMES THE CHILDREN OF IMMI THAT MADE A BIG PUSH TO BLEND IN AND DIDN'T IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS PRIMARLY BY RELIGION, BUT MAINLY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. AND THEIR CHILDREN PERHAPS GOING OFF TO COLLEGE FEEL THEMSELVES CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT CULTURES AND THE IDENTITY THAT THEY MIGHT GRAB ONTO WOULD BE ISLAM AND THEY MIGHT GRAB ONTO A RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE VERSION BC IT SEEMS MORE AUTHENTIC, BUT ACTUALLY CREATE A DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THEIR PARENTS BUT FEEL A SENSE OF COMMON CAUSE WITH OTHER YOUNG PPL. I HAVENT SEEN MUCH OF THAT HAPPENING MOSQUE TO MOSQUE. YOU DO HAVE NODS IN THAT DIRECTION WITH CERTAIN NATIONAL ORG'S LIKE THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA WHICH ORGANIZES CONVENTIONS AND THE MSG IS THERE IS ONE ISLAM FOR EVERYBODY AND EVERYONE COMES TOGETHER AND SO FORTH BUT THAT TENDS TO PAPER OVER DIVISIONS THAT ARE NOT THAT FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE WHERE THE MORE PROSPEROUS INDIAN PAKISTANI MUSLIMS WILL HAVE ONE VIEW OF THINGS, MUCH LESS PROSPEROUS AFRICAN AMERICAN CONGREGATES WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THINGS. IF YOU HANG AROUND FOR A WHILE WITH PPL THOSE DIFFERENCES BEGIN TO COME TO THE SURFACE. THE WAY THEY DO, FRANKLY, IN ANY RELIGIOUS GRP. I MEAN WHAT IF YOU HAD THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIANS AND YOU BROUGHT ALL KINDS OF CHRISTIANS FROM ALL KINDS OF DENOMINATIONS THAT WE WERE ALL – HAD A LOT OF WONDERFUL THINGS TO SAY ABOUT JESUS, OUR LORD AND THE OTHER MARY AND SO AND SO FORTH. YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO THAT FOR A LITTLE WHILE, BUT THEN IF YOU BEGAN TALKING TO THE PRESBYTERIANS AND THE LUTHERNS AND THE PENECOSTALS AND THE CATHOLICS YOU BEGIN TO SEE A LOT OF DIFFERENCES. I THINK ITS IMPORTANT FOR AMERICANS TO THING ABOUT AMERICAN MSULIMS AS HAVING AS MUCH DIFFERENCE AMONG THEMSELVES AS AMERICAN CHRISTIANS HAVE OFTEN BASED ON WHERE THEY'RE FROM, WHAT THE PRACTICES AND PREPECTIVES WERE IN THE

CULTURE THEY COME FROM. AND THAT GOES AS I SAY FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS TO AF AMERICAN ISLAM IS DIFFERENT AND IT IS COMPLETELY WRAPPED UP IN THE HIST OF CLACKS IN THIS COUNTRY. THE PAINFUL HISTORY OF RACE DISCRIMINATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE. YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND AF AMERICAN ISLAM BY READING THE KORAN ALONE, YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND AMERICAN HISTORY. BUT THE HISTORY OF PAKISTANI MUSLIMS IN THIS COUNTRY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERTAND RACIAL HISTORY. THESE ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS.

42:05

QUESTION:SOME PPL ASSUME THE PRESENCE OF WHAT THEY CALL ZIONISM SERVES AS ..IN DISPROPORTIONATELY EFFECT ON MUSLIM COMMUNITIES, DID YOU FIND THAT TO BE THE CASE? OR JUST ONE OF DOZENS OF POSSIBLE ISSUES.

PAUL: OK, BC IM OUTTA LINGO, DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY EURISTIC, ZIONISM SERVES AS A COMMON SOURCE OF ANTIPATHY

...

42:48

WELL IT MAY BE SOMEWHAT FASILE, THEY WAY ANY COUPLE OF SENTENCES FASILE DESCRIBES SOMETHING COMPLICATED. BUT IF YOU ONLY HAVE A FEW SENTENCES AND YOU WANT TO DESCRIBE AN INSTITUTION THAT CONTRADICTS MY MAIN THESIS ABOUT THE VARIETY OF AND THE FLUX, PPL AND THEIR VERY DIFFERENT IDEAS ANTAGONISM TWD ZIONISM IN A SENSE THAT IT IS AN UNJUST MOVEMENT IF THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISREAL WAS A TERRIBLE SIN AN IMPOSTITION ON ARABS AND MUSLIMS. THAT IS A VERY WIDELY HELD VIEW. WHAT PPL DO WITH IT THEN BEGINS TO VARY. DRIVE THEM INTO THE CITY-WELL YOU CANT DRIVE THEM INTO THE CITY, THERE'S A COUNTRY WE HAVE TO FIGURE OUT A COMPROMISE – I MEAN IT'S A HUGE RANGE OF WHERE YOU CAN GO. BUT THE UNDERLYING ANTIPATHY ON WHERE YOU GO W ISREAL IS VERY STRONG, I MEAN THERE IS NO POINT IN DANCING AROUND IT. ITS JUST THE CASE. MOST MSULIMS THINK THE CREATION OF ISREAL WAS AN UNJUST ACT, LAND WAS STOLEN AND SINS WERE COMMITTED. JEWS SEE IT DIFFERENTLY, EUROPEANS SEE IT DIFFERENTLY, ITS PROLLY THE BIGGEST SINGLE SOURCE OF ALIENATION AMONG MUSLIMS IN THIS COUNTRY IS THE

MYSTIFICATION ON HOW THE US COULD MAKE SUCH A HUGE MISTAKE CONSISTENLY IN THE STATE OF ISREAL AS THEY SEE IT, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS. WHY DOESN'T THE US SERVE ITS OWN PURPOSES, SAY FRO THE MOUTH OF A MODERATE, REIGN ISREAL IN, FORCE A COMPROMISE, SO WE CAN ALL MOVE ON. OR FROM THE MOUTH OF SOMEONE WHO IS MORE EXTREME, PULL THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER ISREAL AND WALK AWAY AND LET IT COLLAPSE. ISREAL DOESN'T HAVE MANY FRIENDS AMONG MUSLIM AMERICANS, EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE PPL WHO HAVE A VERY SOPHISTICATED ATTITUDE TWD THE SITUATION AND INTERESTING IDEAS ON HOW TO FIND A COMPROMISE.

44:55

OK...WELL..AS THEY SAY, NOT EVERY NOT IS A SELLER. YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

QUESTION: I HEARD YOU TALKING ABOUT AFRICAN AMERICANS AND ISLAM I HADNT READ YOUR BOOK YET, BUT I INTEND TO VERY INTERESTING ARTICLE IN THE WSJ, I LIKE THE APPROACH BUT I AM NOT VERY WELL VERSED IN WHAT BUT I WANNA UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN YOU USE THE TERM AFRICAN AMERICAN ISLAM IN YOUR VIEW DO YOU FEEL THAT AFRICAN AMERICAN ISLAM IS DIFFERENT FROM ISLAM OR IS IT JUST BC THE NATION OF ISLAM OR BC SOME AF AMERICANS THAT GO TO THAT PARTICLAUR SECTION OF THE FAITH, BUT IN REALITY BEING AFR AMERICAN DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE REALLY NOT A PROPER MUSLIM, DEPENDING ON WHO YOUR COMMUNITY IS AND WHO YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE, DEPEDNING HOW EDUCATED YOU ARE. I HAVE, FOR INSTANCE, SOME FRIENDS ...THAT ARE AFR AMERICANS WHO CONVERTED TO ISLAM AND THAT JUST LIKE MALCOLM X, DIDN'T AGREE W THE NATION OF ISLAM

PAUL: WELL HE DID AT ONE TIME, AND CAM NOT TO TWD THE END OF HIS LIFE.

QUESTION: RIGHT, AND TO ME THAT'S A PROCESS OF GROWTH AND A PROCESS OF MATURITY JUST LIKE SOMEBODY WHO IS MUSLIM AND BECOMES JEWISH OR CHRISITIAN OR WHATEVER ... YOU HAVE

TWO BABIES BORN TODAY... AND YOU SWAP THEM, EACH ONE OF THEM WILL GROW UP IN THE COMMUNITY..

46:50

PAUL: LET ME GIVE YOU MY 25 CENT TOUR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ISLAM, WHICH I THINK IS A DISTINCTIVE INSTITUTION, EVEN THOUGH, I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT BLACK MUSLIMS PURSUE AN INVALID VERSION OF THE RELIGION. FRANKLY IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO SAY WHO'S A PROPER MUSLIM OR NOT

ISLAM ACTUALLY CAME TO THIS COUNTRY WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS, SPECIFICALLY SLAVES FROM WEST AFRICA. A SUBSTANTIAL # OF SLAVES BROUGHT HERE DURING THE ERA OF SLAVERY HAD FOLLOWED SOME DEGREE OF MUSLIM BELIEFS THAT HAD MIGRATED DOWN FROM N AFRICA TO WEST AFRICA. THEY HAD THE ISLAM BEATEN OUT OF THEM BY SLAVE OWNERS WHO MADE THEM INTO CHRISTIANS. AFRICAN AMERICAN ISLAM, OR AT THE POINT AMERICAN ISLAM, THERE WERE NO OTHER MUSLIMS HERE IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, BASICALLY FADDED, OR WENT UNDERGROUND. THERE ARE SOME SCHOLARS THAT SAY NOW THAT SOME OF THESE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES WERE KEPT SECRETLY. THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENT. THERE WAS MOVEMENT OF BLACK FRATERNAL ORDERS, GRPS THAT RESEMBLED THE LIKE THE FREE MASONS, BUT FOR BLACKS SPECIFICALLY. THOSE ORG'S IN A FASCINATING PROCESS WENT BACK TO ISLAMIC IMAGERY AND SOME QUASI ISLAMIC PRACTICES, FOR EX THEY DISTRIBUTED A PAMPHLET CALLED A HOLY KORAN IN THAT PAMPHLET WOULD BE A MISTURE OF 3 OR 4 RELIGIOUS IDEAS BROUGHT IN FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AND SOME OF THEM HAD A KINDA EASTERN CAST TO THEM AND MIGHT REFER TO ALLAH. THEY USED CRESENT IMAGES AND THAT KINDA THING. THESE WERE PART OF AN EFFORT TO DISTINGUISH THESE BLACK FRATERNAL ORDERS FROM THE CHRISTIAN GRPS AND A LEGACY OF SLAVERY AND NOW IN THE EARLY 20TH CENT FROM THE COALESCENT JIM CROW INSTITUTIONS. FROM THAT MOVEMENT THAT HAD ALL KINDS OF INTERESTING NAMES AND BACKGROUNDS, ALMOST ALL OF THEM REVOLVED AROUND CHARISMATIC FIGURE IN THE NATION OF ISLAM FOUNDED IN THE 1930'S RIGHT HERE IN DETROIT. THE NATION OF ISLAM TOOK THIS TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL. IT HAD A FAIRLY DEVELOPED THEOLOGY THAT I WOULD THINK TO BE SORTA QASI ISLAMIC. HAD

AN ISLAMIC TERMINOLOGY AND THEOLOGY BUT IT ALSO REFERRED TO THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE AND ITS IDEAS WERE DEFINED BY ITS LEADER, THE MAIN ORG LEADER WAS ILISAH MOHAMMED, WHO SAID WHAT THE REL WAS. THE MEMBERS OF THE NATION OF ISLAM DID NOT READ THE KORAN, THEY LISTENED TO WHAT ILISAH MOHAMMED TOLD THEM.

QUESTION: ...

49:42

PAUL: ILISAH MOHAMMED DIED IN 1975, THIS IS EXTEREMLY DISILLUSIONING FOR MANY BLACK MUSLIMS, BC RIGHT THEN AND THERE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO LIVE ACCORDING TO HIS THEOLOGY FOR GENERATIONS AND GENERATIONS. AND THEN IN THE BEGINNING OF 1975, BLACK MUSLIMS DECIDED TO QUIETLY SEPARATE FROM THE NATION OF ISLAM, DIDN'T NEC MAKE A BIG DEAL ABOUT IT, BUT GRADUALLY MOVED AWAY. ONE OF MY SUBJECTS, CALLED THE IMAM, IS A GUY STARTED AS A BAPTIST, JOINED THE NATION OF ISLAM, AFTER 1975 WAS PLUCKED BY A SAUDI FUNDED TRUSSLE ORG TO BE TRAINED AS AN IMAM IN CONVENTIONAL RELIGION. HE DID SOME OF THAT TRAINING IN THIS COUNTRY AND WAS ACTUALLY BROUGHT TO MECCA FOR 4 MO FOR INTENSIVE TRAINING HE CAME BACK AND OPENED A MOSQUE IN BEDFORD STYVUSENT IN THAT ROUGH COMMUNITY IN BK, NY. HE IS NOW A VERY COMMON CHARACTER. AN INDEPENDENT BLCK IMAM WHO LOOKS TO THE ME FOR WHAT THE RELIGION MEANS, WHO DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF FROM BUT WHOS WORLD VIEW IS VERY MUCH SHAPED BY THE BLACK AMERICAN EXPERIENCE WHEN HE PREACHES HE STILL REFERS TO MALCOLM X AND MARTIN LUTHER KING AND HE REFERS TO GOV CONSPIRACIES AGAINST BLACK AMERICANS AND DARK FORCES THAT ARE ARRAYED AGAINST BLACK AMERICANS AND ANY TIME WE TRY TO SUCCEED THEY WILL UNDERCUT US. NOW ALL OF THAT HAS TO DO WITH, NOT THE KORAN, BUT WITH AMERICAN HIST.

QUESTION: BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT HAS MORE TO DO WITH THE AFR AMERICAN CULTURE, BC WHAT YOU'RE SAYING EXACTLY HAPPENS W THE AFR AMERICAN THAT IS ALSO CHRISITIAN...

51:27

PAUL: THAT'S MY POINT. THOSE IDEAS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE KORAN AND AFR AMERICANS HAVE IN THIS WORLD VIEW TAKE THEIR PLACE ALONG OTHER MUSLIMS AROUND THE WORLD WHO ARE AFFLICTED AND I THINK YOU AND I ARE BASICALLY AGREEING

QUESTION: I AM TRY TO EDUCATE MYSELF, IM NOT , I WANT TO EDU MYSELF FROM YOUR PT OF VIEW. I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT I UNDERSTAND THAT WHAT YOUR SAYING DOESN'T MEAN, THAT BC THEY ARE AFR AMERICAN MUSLIMS THEY HAVE A VIEW OF BEING PUT DOWN, CUZ UNFORTUNATELY FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE HIST, THE FEELING IS THERE AND IT IS GOING TO TAKE A LONG TIME TO TAKE IT AWAY.

PAUL: BUT IT HAS A NEW TWIST AS IT GETS COMBINED W ISLAMIC IDEAS.

QUESTIONER: CUZI AGREE WITH YOU THAT IT IS ACTUALLY ONLY SECTION OF ISLAM THAT HAS DIF VERSIONS OF, AS YOU KNOW THE KORAN IS W/I ISLAMIC BELIEF HAS NO CHANGE TO IT WHATSOEVER NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN THAT SEC OF ISLAM, AND THAT DEFINITELY PROVES THAT. YOU'VE GOT A GOOD PT.

52:50

PAUL: WELL RIGHT, AND THAT IS ACTUALLY IT SOUNDS AN INCONTROLABLE IDEA, BUT I THINK IT IS INCONTROLABLE AT ALL. SOME MSULIMS SAY THE KORAN IS THE KORAN IS THE KORAN, THERE IS NO DISPUTE THERE IS ONLY WAY TO READ IT. AND THERE ARE SOME OTHER VERY LEARNED MSULIMS THAT SAY, THAT CANT BE THE CASE. IN THE 21ST CENT THE DOC IS INEVITABLY IS READ DIFFERENTLY FROM HOW IT WAS READ IN THE 11TH CENT. I DON'T WANT TO...

QUESTIONER: I THINK THIS IS A GOOD DEBATE, BUT I THINK WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE KORAN ITSELF. I KIND OF DISAGREE WITH YOU THAT.. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KORANS. THERE IS ONE KORAN, BUT THE

INTERPRETATION IS ABSOLUTELY IF WE ARE NOT OPEN TO INTERPRET IT, WHETHER IF YOU ARE MUSLIM OR NOT, ... W THE TIMING, W THE SCIENCE. IT IS ASININE, IN A SENSE, BUT I THINK A LOT OF PPL WHO ARE NOT FROM THE MUSLIM FAITH WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND, AND THAT'S WHY ITS PROLLY THE ONLY BOOK IN THE WORLD THAT IS MEMORIZED BY SO MANY PPL BC IT'S THE SAME OVER AND OVER . YOU HAVE PPL 11 YRS OLD TO 70 YRS OLD THAT ARE COMPLETELY, YOU FIND ANYBODY THAT KNOWS THE BIBLE BY HEART, EVEN THE POPE BC THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT. AND BEING ABLE TO MEMORIZE IT, IS THE FACT THAT IT IS THE SAME. NOW HOW YOU INTREPRET IT, WHAT YOU DO WITH IT, YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT YOU COULD DO HARM, YOU COULD DO GOOD.

54:27

PAUL: TO BE COMPLETELY SELF-SERVING, I THINK YOU'RE GONNA REALLY LIKE THE BOOK. (LAUGHS) BC YOUR QUESTIONS

QUESTIONER: I DO KNOW. I REALLY CANT WAIT TO READ IT. I DON'T WANT TO TAKE UP TO MUCH TIME...

54:39

PAUL: I THINK IM GONNA SIT DOWN. (MOVES TO SIT DOWN... HEAD IS CUT OUT OF VISUAL VIEW**)

QUESTIONER: YOU TALK ABOUT THE ISNA AND I...WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF ANOTHER ORG THAT .. TO DO A LOT OF GOOD TO THE AMERICAN MUSLIMSINCE YOU MENTION IT, I WOULD THINK YOU ARE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH...

PAUL: MY APPROACH IN THIS BOOK WAS TO, VERY SUBCONCIOUSLY, NOT SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON ORGS AND WHO'S JOB IT IS TO BE A SPOKESMEN. I WANTED TO FIND PPL WHO WERE OUT IN THE FIELD. PRACTICING, DOING THINGS.

55:31(VISUAL: IMPROVEMENT OF PAUL SITTING DOWN*)

CARE IS A VIGOROUS AND MANY WAYS A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY GRP. THERE MISSION IS TO DEFINE CIVIL RIGHTS OF MUSLIMS AND TO SOUNDLY ALARM OF THREATS OVER THERE CONSTITUENCY AND

TO DEMAND THAT AMERICAN PRINCIPLES BE FULLFILLED ON BEHALF OF MUSLIMS IN THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE FULLFILLED ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICANS. BEING AN ADVOCACY GRP. LIKE ADVOCACY GRPS OF ALL SORTS, THERE APPROACH IS OFTEN NOT SO MUCH TO FIND THE MOST REASONABLE OR COMMON WAY TO SAY SOMETHING, OR TO FIND A COMPROMISE ON THE WIDEST # OF PPL WILL AGREE ON, IS TO SAY THINGS VERY SHARPLY. AND THAT SRVES A ROLE BUT I THINK THERE ALSO THEY SHOLD BE OTHER VOICES AS WELL, VOICES THAT ARE NOT PURELY DEFENSIVE, BUT ALSO MORE, SOMEONE USED THE WORD HOLISITIC BEFORE, SO BEYOND THAT...

56:45

QUESTIONER: I APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENT. I'LL JUST ADD A LITTLE BIT TO THAT. UNFORTUNATELY IN THE WORLD WHERE YOU HAVE OTHER ORG'S THAT ADVOCATE IN A SETTING OF COMFORT LIKE THE ANTI...?? LEAGUE, WHICH IS THE REASON WHY I ASK IS BC THEY ARE VERY ANTI-CARE AND SOMETIMES I READ ARTICLES, AND I WONDER SOMETIMES, IF YOU ARE AN ADVOCATE FOR THIS GRP, WHY DON'T YOU GUYS GET TO TOGETHER AND WORK TOGETHER INSTEAD OF...

57:12

PAUL: WELL NOW YOU'RE GETTING TO EXACTL MY PT. IM NOT SURE HOW PRODUCTIVE THE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE GRPS IS. FOR MY PURPOSES IN THIS BOOK, IT WASN'T PRODUCTIVE AT ALL. I THOUGHT I COULD LEARN ALMOST NOTHING FROM THAT AND I SHOULD BASICALLY SET THAT TO ONE SIDE AND GO TAL TO SOME REAL PPL.

QUESTIONER:
I APPRECIATE THAT

PAUL: ALL RIGHT, DINNER TIME. THANK YOU FOR COMING.